



Katoomba resident Bette Mifsud received a State government arts fellowship for her contribution to photography.

Artists honoured with fellowship

By Scott Warren and Joshua MacKenzie

Given that the Blue Mountains is the City of the Arts it should not come as any surprise that two of the three winners of the inaugural Western Sydney Arts Fellowship are long term residents of the Mountains.

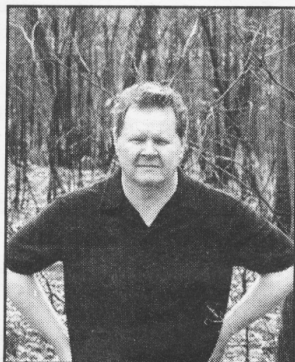
Peter Charuk and Bette Mifsud were both honoured in a ceremony at Parramatta's Riverside Theatre on February 7, where they received their fellowship awards.

Peter said that the money would go a long way to seeing his work-in-progress entitled "Men's work" in which he will visit factories and other workplaces to photograph men in their working environments.

"This is a great help for the projects I am currently working on, and also a boost to personal and professional prestige," Peter said.

Peter will take leave from his job as a lecturer of Fine Arts at University of Western Sydney to complete the series, which would not have been possible, he said, without the support of his wife, Elizabeth.

Peter is also currently working on a video of the recent bushfires that he will exhibit.



Peter Charuk stands in front of bushland devastated by January's fires — which is also the focus of a project he is currently working on.

"It is not so really a documentary. It's just me with a hose in one hand and a video camera in the other, at the front line," he said.

Peter also commended the government on finally recognising Western Sydney as a haven of great art.

Peter exhibits most of his work at the Stills Gallery in Paddington, but hopes that in the future he can hold local exhibitions.

Katoomba resident Bette Mifsud, was also awarded a Western Sydney Arts Fellow-

ship for her contribution to photography.

Like Peter, Bette said the grant will be a great boost to her artistic career as she explores the different meanings and possibilities of photography.

"I'm absolutely thrilled," she said. "It's a real boost to your career as an artist as well as your own work, because it means you've got more freedom to do things that weren't possible before."

The casual photography lecturer at the University of Western Sydney Nepean and Nepean TAFE plans to make more large photographic landscape murals for an outdoors exhibition.

Bette focuses mainly on landscape photography and will be using shots of Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains for her next exhibition.

"I don't think I have a particular style, I'm interested in pushing the boundaries of the genre of photography and also landscape imagery.

"I've been taking photos since I was 10 and I just love the medium of photography because it's so close to the truth yet it's not truth at all in a strict sense, and you can manipulate that," she said.